

Rita. And we heard them provide their unique insights into what we have done well with regard to education in the Gulf Coast region, as well as what obstacles we still face.

Unfortunately, some officials testified that they have yet to receive their full, expected sum of federal impact aid dollars. And as we consider this legislation today, I am especially hopeful that some of the bureaucratic problems we've witnessed in the past several months will end—and end soon.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this: as educators, joined by parents and students from the region, work to rebuild an academic way of life, they ought to have all of the necessary tools at their disposal. The measure we are considering today takes a major step toward providing just that. And I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5354.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOALS OF NATIONAL ONE-STOP MONTH

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 808) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of the goals of National One-Stop Month.

The Clerk read as follows:

##### H. RES. 808

Whereas national workforce professional organizations and the local workforce investment boards will celebrate National One-Stop Month from May 1 to 31, 2006;

Whereas workforce investment boards and One-Stop delivery system were created under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and are designed to provide a full range of employment solutions to employers and job seekers in a single location;

Whereas more than 600 workforce investment boards and 2,000 One-Stop Career Centers are enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation by providing workforce solutions for hundreds of thousands of employers annually across the United States;

Whereas, in the spirit of the Workforce Investment Act, the cornerstones of maximizing customer choice, employment and training solutions, and universal access are the primary missions of the One-Stop delivery system, allowing more than 14,000,000 job seekers annually the opportunity to connect with the tools they need for their next career opportunity;

Whereas each year the One-Stop delivery system and regional workforce investment boards contribute to the competitiveness of the Nation's workforce by providing training assistance through grants to job seekers and employed workers and other programs to more than 400,000 Americans so they may upgrade or acquire new skills; and

Whereas, in the spirit of the Workforce Investment Act, the private sector leadership

of the regional workforce investment boards provides the planning, oversight, and accountability of workforce strategies that succeed in communities across the country: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of National One-Stop Month; and

(2) supports the efforts of the workforce investment boards and One-Stop delivery system in preparing the Nation's workforce.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 808.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, associations representing the local workforce development community have declared May National One-Stop Month. I rise this afternoon in support of H. Res. 808, which expresses the support of the House of Representatives for the goals of National One-Stop Month and supports the work of the Nation's local workforce investment boards.

The one-stop delivery system this resolution recognizes is a product of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, or WIA. WIA consolidated numerous Federal training programs and integrated employment and training services at the local level in a more unified workforce development system. Local business-led workforce investment boards now direct the activities of the system.

One of the hallmarks of WIA is the establishment of One-Stop Career Centers to provide re-employment services and job training to individuals looking for a new or better job. The centers were developed to increase access to Federal and State resources available to help individuals obtain employment of their choice.

While WIA funds are available for occupational training, there are numerous other Federal programs that provide employment assistance. These programs, including adult education, vocational rehabilitation, veterans employment programs and more, must make their services available through the centers. WIA created One-Stop Career Centers to provide a single point of access for individuals desiring services through these programs. The one-stop delivery system also provides labor market information regarding the kinds of jobs currently available in a local area, data on growing industries and job listings to assist individuals in making informed career choices.

Over 2,000 one-stop centers across the Nation have connected millions of individuals with the tools they need to find their next employment opportunity, while helping employers find the workers they need.

The economy is dynamic, and research shows that the types of growing industries are changing. The Nation's job training programs are critical to our ongoing effort to equip Americans with the resources and skills they need to find a new or better job in today's knowledge-based economy. Local workforce investment boards have responded to these challenges by creating comprehensive services to assist our workforce.

Approximately 5.2 million new jobs have been created since August of 2003. With solid and consistent job growth in high-wage, high-skill occupations, renewing and strengthening the Federal investment in workforce development and job training is more critical than ever. Last year, this House approved legislation to reauthorize WIA and renew the one-stop delivery system, and we hope for further action on that legislation to build upon the success already attained. Yet in the interim, we know our local community leaders remain committed to providing the best services possible for the Nation's job seekers.

I commend the chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, Congressman RIC KELLER of Florida, for introducing this measure to highlight the critical assistance that the local boards and the one-stop delivery system provide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of National One-Stop Month. For over 30 years, Congress has worked hard on a bipartisan basis to create a job training system that works well for both employers and employees.

During the Clinton administration, job training advocates developed the idea of a universal system, a one-stop job training system that would provide needed job search, placement and training services to all job seekers who walked through its doors. The system would also be a one-stop system for employers, providing outreach and matching services to enable employers to find workers with the job skills that they need.

Approximately 2,000 one-stop centers and the workforce boards that oversee them now exist in all of our communities, providing a 21st century resource for all. This system is an investment in our economy and in our country.

But that investment is also under attack. For the past 6 years, the administration and this Congress have been cutting funding for the one-stop system. The one-stops have not had a single inflation adjustment in 6 years. The

one-stops have actually had their budgets cut about \$700 million since 2001. This Congress has failed to reauthorize the one-stop system, and has insisted on opening it up to religious discrimination, which has never existed or been a problem for years. Most recently, in its 2007 budget request, the administration proposed effectively eliminating the one-stop system and turning it into a voucher program run by the Governors.

Democrats believe in job training to help workers improve their skills and find good-paying jobs to support their families. Democrats believe in helping employers find workers with the skills they need to compete in the global economy. In order to truly help employers and employees, we must adequately fund the one-stops and our job training system.

□ 1430

This is a low-cost investment in our future. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and to support improved funding for a 21st-century job-training system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close at this time. We have no further speakers. Again, I thank my colleague from New York for her support and the support of all Members across the aisle for this resolution.

Let me just close by saying that in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, I personally visited some of these one-stop shops in my district and was really impressed with the work that they were doing.

They were very successful in matching up those in need of jobs with available jobs. And so this is a worthy resolution. I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 808, a measure expressing support for the goals of National One-Stop Month. As we stand here today we find ourselves in an increasingly competitive job market, one in which the knowledge and skills of each job seeker play a critical role in determining whether the individual will succeed. And while our economy has created more than 5.2 million new jobs since August 2003, we still have work ahead of us to provide the resources and training workers need to claim and keep these new jobs.

Testifying before the House Education and the Workforce Committee several years ago, former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan told Members of our panel that providing "rigorous education and ongoing training to all members of our society" is essential for future job growth and worker security in the United States. His words ring all the more true today, as our workforce takes on the new realities of an increasingly competitive global economy.

Eight years ago, when Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act, we did so with an eye toward preparing our working men and women for the challenges of a turn-of-the-cen-

tury economy. Indeed, the 21st century is no longer the age of machine and muscle but, rather, has become the age of the mind.

And central to our efforts in crafting the Workforce Investment Act was the establishment of the one-stop system. One-stop career centers are aimed at providing a single, convenient, central location to offer job training and other employment-related services. And they have been remarkably successful for countless Americans.

In my view, the establishment of one-stops in 1998 was the single most important federal job training accomplishment in a generation. We brought dozens of disparate services under one roof, providing a better deal for job seekers and a better investment for American taxpayers.

Last year, this House approved legislation to build upon the success of the one-stop system, and as we hope for further congressional action on that measure, we take time this month to celebrate the achievements of those who have been involved in the one-stops—including those providing services and those benefiting from them.

Mr. Speaker, May is National One-Stop Month, but for those seeking high-quality employment services, the one-stops are there for them all year long. I applaud them, and I look for them to play an even bigger role in our job training system in the decades to come. I thank my colleague Mr. KELLER, the chairman of the 21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee, for bringing this resolution to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 808.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### VETERANS' HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1235) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the availability of \$400,000 in life insurance coverage to servicemembers and veterans, to make a stillborn child an insurable dependent for purposes of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program, to make technical corrections to the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, to make permanent a pilot program for direct housing loans for Native American veterans, and to require an annual plan on outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1235

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

#### TITLE I—HOUSING MATTERS

Sec. 101. Adapted housing assistance for disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member.

Sec. 102. Adjustable rate mortgages.

Sec. 103. Permanent authority to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans.

Sec. 104. Extension of eligibility for direct loans for Native American veterans to a veteran who is the spouse of a Native American.

Sec. 105. Technical corrections to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004.

#### TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Sec. 201. Additional duty for the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training to raise awareness of skills of veterans and of the benefits of hiring veterans.

Sec. 202. Modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training.

Sec. 203. Reauthorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

#### TITLE III—LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE MATTERS

Sec. 301. Duration of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage for totally disabled veterans following separation from service.

Sec. 302. Limitation on premium increases for reinstated health insurance of servicemembers released from active military service.

Sec. 303. Preservation of employer-sponsored health plan coverage for certain reserve-component members who acquire TRICARE eligibility.

#### TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 401. Inclusion of additional diseases and conditions in diseases and disabilities presumed to be associated with prisoner of war status.

Sec. 402. Consolidation and revision of outreach authorities.

Sec. 403. Extension of annual report requirement on equitable relief cases.

#### TITLE V—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS

Sec. 501. Technical and clarifying amendments to new traumatic injury protection coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Sec. 502. Terminology amendments to revise references to certain veterans in provisions relating to eligibility for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

Sec. 503. Technical and clerical amendments.

#### TITLE I—HOUSING MATTERS

##### SEC. 101. ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY A FAMILY MEMBER.

(a) ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2102 the following new section: